

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/blog/videos/producing-a-career-from-the-ground-up-entire-talk>

Acclaimed film and television producer Gale Anne Hurd knows what it takes to build a career from scratch in a tough industry. Hurd describes her path from entry-level roles in the entertainment industry to becoming a leader in the Hollywood community, based on taking chances, making yourself indispensable and staying committed to what you love.



## Transcript

Yes, I'm a Stanford grad.. I graduated about 35 years ago from The Farm.. As you probably know, none of this existed back then.. So, I - actually, I notice there is a Harvard-Westlake shirt here, I actually went to Westlake School For Girls, back before it was a merged high school and - but then my family moved to Palm Springs.. Palm Springs had a huge high school.. At the time, we did not have college counselors because only 20% of the graduates of Palm Springs High School at the time, which is 1973, went on to college.. And the two things, as you see on the slide, that they had in common was back in the 70s, both had a mascot of the Indians.. It's the - Palm Springs High School's still the Indians today because the school is actually on Agua Caliente Indian land.. So, as I said, I got into Stanford not knowing very much.. And in fact oops, missing - anyway, I actually thought that Stanford was in Connecticut..

I thought it was in the Ivy League - of course, all of us who go here assume it's in the Ivy League, we just play in the bigger leagues of the pack, what are we at, Pack 12 now? Pack 8 and then Pack 10 when I was here.. And - but when I got to Stanford, I actually thought I was going to be a marine biologist.. Until I took my first science class and realized there were all those premeds who took it really seriously and didn't want to have any fun.. So, I changed my major and my father told me that he would really only pay for college if I got a degree in business.. Well, he clearly didn't - he didn't research Stanford very well either, because there is no undergraduate business degree here, it's economics.. So I started taking economics and there was a very, very happy accident.. My junior year, I decided to attend Stanford in Britain.. But the building you will see on the slide is where Stanford in Britain was back then, which was Cliveden House.. Famous for their Profumo Affair, if you've heard about it, nothing really new: people in government interacting with prostitutes and call girls and possibly defense secrets may have been compromised because those prostitutes were also consorting with people behind the Iron Curtain, including Russian spies.. But when I was there, there was an intensive program in two different areas of study..

One was Economics and the other was British Film and Broadcasting.. As you probably know, Stanford is not really known the way that UCLA, or NYU, or USC is for its film department.. So I wasn't even aware that there was a film studies program at Stanford, until I got to Stanford in Britain.. And while I was there, I had a fantastic professor by the name of Julian Blaustein.. And Julian was the only person in the communications department here at Stanford who had real life experience.. Now you're all very, very lucky because many of the people that you interact with have actually succeeded in the outside world, setup start ups, and have chosen to come back to teach.. Well, in the communications department at the time, Julian Blaustein was the only person who had done that.. And he - and he decided to encourage me to study film and broadcasting and he became my advisor.. So my junior year, I declared a second major in communications.. And I had to complete the program in two years, which is not easy..

It meant that I was taking every possible class in the communications department and I was also very lucky because a professor of mine from whom I took three different courses, a gentleman by the name of Steven Kovacs, right after my senior year, was recruited to go to work for someone I admit, I had never heard of, Roger Corman.. Now in those days, when I started Stanford, we used slide rules.. I'm sure that you've never seen a slide rule.. And there was no internet.. So I couldn't Google Roger Corman, which made it very difficult to go to interview with him because there were no books written about Roger Corman.. However, I did have the advantage of a couple of things, which is real life experience.. While I was at Stanford, I worked at KZSU.. And it was the best experience that I had.. The two things that changed my life were Stanford in Britain, Julian Blaustein teaching the courses there, and working at KCSU.. And that actually prepared me for getting the

phone call that I received and a letter from Steven Kovacs after I graduated, asking me to come down and interview for Roger Corman..

So I came down to Los Angeles, not knowing that Roger Corman had changed the face of American film by mentoring the top talent.. Roger mentored - he mentored Martin Scorsese, who made his first film for Roger Corman.. Francis Coppola made his first film for Roger Corman.. Jack Nicholson has a career because of Roger Corman.. The first film that - the first film from Jonathan Demme was from Roger Corman.. Try to imagine the American film industry without these icons.. Well, that would have been the case without Roger Corman.. So, I was invited to come down and meet with Roger.. So in the 1970s, this is in 1978, there was no career path for women in the film industry.. You were a secretary, you perhaps stayed at the very low level of a story editor, you'd be costume designer, but there really weren't options if you wanted to pursue a career as an executive or as a film producer..

Except if you worked for Roger Corman.. Roger met me, I flew myself down - well, actually I drove down to Los Angeles and when I met him, the first thing I assumed he was going to ask me how fast I took dictation.. Yes, I knew shorthand - another thing that I know is archaic and none of you have heard of.. And I expected he would ask me how quickly I could type, which is about 80 words per minute.. What I never expected was that the question he had for me was: what do you ultimately want to do in the motion picture industry? I didn't think that was even an option.. I hadn't considered it, which goes to show you that if you're going to go in for a job interview, make sure you've thought of everything.. Because perhaps you will meet with the one person who will ask you something that you never believed beyond your wildest dreams could happen.. So I thought very, very quickly, I had degrees in economics and communications.. I mean, if the sky is the limit, I want to be a producer.. So, I told Roger that I wanted to be a producer..

That meeting went extremely well and then I never heard from him again.. Well, that again was actually three months.. Three months later, he called me on a Friday, I was living in Menlo Park, a half a block from the freeway with six other roommates, one of whom kept rattlesnakes in his room, which I only found out - by the way that's illegal - which I only found out when I woke up one morning and there was a rattlesnake curled at the end of my bed.. That really encouraged me to want to get out of town.. So, Roger called me on a Friday afternoon and said can you start on Monday? I said sure.. What I didn't ask was what is the salary, is there a relocation fee, where am I going to live? But the truth is, I had an opportunity and I took it.. With Roger Corman at the time, he was running a company called New World Pictures.. New World Pictures was the largest independent development, production and distribution company in the United States.. He made exploitation films.. I mean, he made Piranha because he was inspired by Jaws so he wanted to make his version of Jaws; that was Piranha..

He made a number of movies, Up From The Depths, Avalanche.... the Irvin Allen disaster movies were very, very popular.. So he made his very, very low budget versions of those.. And he - after I worked with him for about a year as his assistant, which essentially meant everything from making coffee, picking up his dry cleaning, giving story notes on scripts, coming up with ideas from script - for scripts, rewriting scripts, casting films, and giving notes to directors, which was a very embarrassing experience.. My second day there, after I'd come back from dropping off his dry cleaning, he said Gale, will you go look at this rough cut of a film? I have to tell you, I didn't know what a rough cut was.. So I went in, I looked at the film and the music sounded awful, I couldn't understand the dialogue when people walked across the room, there were no footsteps, so I had pages and pages and pages of notes on all of that.. Roger looked at them and said, Gale, do you know what a rough cut is? I said no, they didn't teach me that at Stanford.. And it - that was the first time he fired me.. What I didn't realize the first time he fired me was that, that was only a temporary firing.. He still expected me to come in the next day..

So when I didn't show up the next day, I got this irate phone call from him saying why aren't you here? If you don't come in right away, I'm going to fire you.. I said you fired me yesterday, he said I didn't mean that.. I mean, I said, how do I know? He said, oh you will know.. Anyway, so he called me into his office and he always - whenever there was bad news, he would always start by saying, now Gale.. You did not want to hear those two words or whatever your name happened to be.. Came into his office and he says, now Gale, I have a wonderful opportunity for you, okay.. He said the people running the marketing department - and this is the company that was distributing six films a month - and in addition to those exploitation films which he developed, produced and distributed, he was also making - he was also distributing the best foreign films available in America.. And that included Francois Truffaut films, Ingmar Bergman films, Volker Schlöndorff films, Akira Kurosawa films.. But in each case you had to start from scratch, create an entire marketing campaign, do all of the production notes, create the ad slicks for the newspaper ads, the radio spots, the TV spots, which that was very rare because we couldn't afford them, and the trailers.. There had been a three person department..

Roger notified me that he wanted me to take over the marketing department.. I thought that was fantastic to go from Roger's assistant to head of the marketing department.. And then of course there was the caveat, I was going to be the marketing department.. It was going to - in a cost cutting measure, it was going from three people to one.. But you know what? When opportunity knocks on the door, you close your eyes, you take a deep breath and you say yes.. I said yes.. So, anyway - so, I had to start over and learn something from the very beginning.. I'd had no training in marketing.. So I had to learn the skills I needed.. I had to give up a personal life completely..

I lost a boyfriend - he wasn't the right guy for me anyway.. However, I did one smart thing.. I made a deal with him before I accepted the position.. I said Roger, I don't think I'm going to be very good at this.. First of all, I have no experience,

secondly it just doesn't seem like a good fit for me, but if I do this job for six months - and you have to promise me you won't fire me in this six months - that you will then give me a job on the set of a film production.. He said absolutely.. So I worked 18 to 20 hour days, seven days a week.. And I relied on the kindness of strangers and friends who pulled me through, who helped me in every imaginable way.. And the interesting thing is, after all these many years, this is 1978, 1979, we still have reunions of the groups who worked for Roger Corman and toiled away doing the impossible.. You had to - you either - you would sink or swim, very much like a startup..

So, as I - as you see here, I create campaigns for The Lady In Red, The Who documentary, The Kids Were All Right, which if you haven't seen, it is fantastic, Francois Truffaut's The Green Room, Ingmar Bergman's Autumn Sonata.. Anyway, I marched into Roger and that took a lot of confidence for someone who at the time didn't have a lot of confidence.. And I said Roger, it's been six months.. It's time for you to make good on your deal, let's - I will help you find someone who is really good at marketing, who wants to do this job, as opposed to had a gun to their head to do the job and that's what I did.. I spent a couple of weeks, I found someone who was fantastic and I worked with them and got them up to speed.. And the entire time that I worked for Roger Corman, I never got a raise.. My salary was \$180 a week, whether I was picking up Roger Corman's laundry, babysitting his kids, reviewing rough cuts or head of marketing.. And once again, Roger was interested in people and he would give them opportunities they would never get anywhere else in the industry because he believed, first of all, that you could do it and you were cheap.. So, slide.. Be careful what you wish for..

Never assume.. You learn more from your mistakes than your successes.. Roger promised me a job on set; he never said what that position would be.. I learned a big lesson there.. But it was - he was right and I was wrong.. I assumed that I would go from director - from head of marketing to producing.. I thought that was a lateral move.. Well, what you learn in marketing is helpful in producing, but it is not the job of a producer.. Roger insisted that I start out again, at the bottom.. So once again it's important to remember that it's all a learning experience..

And so what did I do? I went to work as a production assistant on Humanoids from the Deep.. Tagline, they hunt human women not for killing, but for mating.. Remarkable at the time, the movie was directed by a woman.. Women did not get opportunities to direct then.. They very rarely get opportunities to direct now.. But under Roger Corman, you could direct films, you could write films, you could edit films.. It was an equal opportunity, take advantage of talent, factory, anyway.. So here I am, I'm two years out of Stanford and I have to tell my parents I graduated, elected to Phi Beta Kappa as a junior, so I was top 2% of my class, two years later I'm broke.. I've been demoted from head of marketing at New World Pictures to a gopher, I'm working on a movie about monsters who rape women.. I'm still making \$180 a week and now I'm working seven days a week, 20 hours a day, up in Fort Bragg in Mendocino..

Looking back, it was the best decision I ever made.. Because working with me on that set were people that I would work with again, which I will get to.. Anyway, I learned every job on the set.. I chose to become indispensable whether that meant preparing call sheets or emptying chemical toilets in motor homes.. I didn't say no, I didn't say I'm too good for this.. I did it and I did it well.. And if you do that you will never have to do it again because they will give you more responsibility.. So, I never complained.. There were days just like in a start-up, I would work 36 hours straight.. I was the lowest person in the totem pole, but I was earning my way and I was earning the respect of everyone on the set..

And I learned from a crew that was the best in the business who went on to win Academy Awards.. Composer James Horner, special makeup effects guru Rob Bottin.. James Horner went on to compose the score for Aliens, win the Academy Award for Titanic.. Did I question my decision? Every day.. I was completely terrified I'd made the wrong career choice.. My parents who had invested a pretty penny in my Stanford education, and I was still making \$180 a week threatened to disown me.. My friends were graduating from business school, well on their way to medical or law degrees and I was emptying chemical toilets in motor homes, working 20 hours a day.. And I got to the point where I actually promised my father that if things didn't improve, that I'd come to my senses and apply to law school.. But I was hooked on the movies.. So, I took the path that was less traveled, especially so at the time for women..

There was - there were no role models.. So my advice, do what you love, not what's easy.. Challenge expectations, including your own, and stay hungry which isn't just an expression when you're earning \$180 a week.. When there are no role models, become one.. Women will really scarce in the producing ranks in the '70s.. But I had two mentors, Roger Corman, and Barbara Boyle who is the COO of New World Pictures and she is now Academic Chair at UCLA Film School.. They encouraged me and they helped me when I need them - needed them, which was to get my first film, The Terminator, made.. So I was working at the only company in Hollywood where women could indeed succeed.. It was an old-fashioned old boys club everywhere else.. And the only place where women could move up and do non-traditional - take non-traditional jobs, was for Roger Corman..

He insisted he wasn't trying to level the playing field.. He insisted that it was just women worked harder for less money and never complained.. So from 1980 to 2012 - just the highlights.. It really is not only what you know that's absolutely important.. It's who you know and that was Roger Corman and Barbara Boyle.. Do your homework, be prepared when opportunity knocks.. Ask for help.. It would have been so much easier on me, if I had said to someone what's a rough cut? As oppose to spending hours doing notes that were completely useless.. Learn to spot talent and support them through thick and thin, enjoy your successes and consider failure an opportunity to get it right next time.. The reason that Battle Beyond the

Stars is on the slide here, is because that's where I first encountered Jim Cameron..

Roger sent me to the model shop where a team was creating spaceship miniatures.. And there was a very tall, blonde young man who walked in and said, are you Roger's assistant? I said - yes, I am - and he said let me show you the model shop.. He showed me every spaceship; he talked about why the design was the way that it was what inspired him.. He showed me all the drawings that he had done and when I went back to Roger, I said the model shop's in fantastic shape.. I mean, the head of the model shop this gentlemen this guy Jim Cameron.. He said, he is not the head of the model shop.. I said he is not? I said well then he should be.. Not only did Jim become the head of the model shop.. But when we had problems on the film, which by the way the script was written by John Sayles, any of you indy film fans.. The art director of the film had come out of the studio system and he wasn't familiar with the Roger Corman's "Sink or swim, do every job yourself because you are the department" philosophy..

He needed drafts people and set designers to design and create blueprints for sets.. We didn't have that in the budget.. So 25 days before shooting, not one set had been designed and there were 25 of them, nor built.. So, Roger sent me at the time to see how things were going in the studio that he had, which was actually a former lumber company called Hammond Lumber Company.. And we called it Hammond Lumber Company because it cost \$500 to remove the sign that said Hammond Lumber Company and Roger didn't want to spend the \$500.. And I went back and said I'm really concerned, there is not one set designed and we start shooting in 25 days.. So what do you recommend? And I said I think we need to replace the art director and he said who? And I said well, you know what, Jim Cameron designed all of the spaceship models and the exteriors.. He can draw, he can do blueprints.. Jim Cameron went from being a model builder to the art director of the film and the special visual effects consultant, almost overnight.. Spotting talent..

So one night after Jim and I had been working very, very hard to get the first set ready to shoot and I was the assistant production manager at this point.. And we needed to - we had to shoot the next morning.. And even though I was the assistant production manager, I did whatever was necessary, which meant getting a Hudson sprayer and working all night spraying the sets, so we would have something to shoot the next morning.. And Jim and I made a promise that night before the first day of shooting, that after working 36 hours straight, he knew he could trust me.. And I knew I could trust him.. We promised that we'd learn our craft.. I'd go off and produce a film, he'd direct a film.. And then we would make our first independent film together.. We kept that promise.. Jim directed Piranha Two, The Spawning..

It's about flying saltwater piranha.. I produced a movie that was a rip off, a teen rip off of Smokey and the Bandit, which was called Smokey Bites the Dust.. It cost \$280,000.. I don't recommend any of you go to Netflix and watch either film.. Jim has conveniently taken Piranha Two, The Spawning off of his resume.. I'm not sure if it's still on IMDb, you can check, but we kept our promise and we collaborated on the Terminator, which we co-wrote.. It took four years of knocking on doors to get the film made, but my mentor Barbara Boyle had moved on to a company called Orion Pictures.. She talked her bosses into co-financing the film and distributing it.. And my mentor Roger Corman talked to the completion guarantee company Film Finances and told them that I would be able to deliver the film for the budget and they signed on.. Now without both of those and without having learnt the film industry from the bottom up on set I would have failed, so secrets of success..

Tell the truth even if it makes your path harder.. Never give up, always give back, don't make a play until you have the right product, skills and mentors and the right partners.. Partners.. We made Terminator together, we made Aliens together, we made The Abyss together.. When we were on pre-production on the Abyss, we split up: we'd been married, the relationship wasn't working, we broke up, we didn't let that affect the work.. We went on to finish the Abyss and then Terminator II and then Jim took on a new producing partner.. So what did I have to do, I had to pick up the pieces and move on.. Many of you will find that you'll need a new partner and not all partnerships work out, so take a deep breath or a vacation.. I strongly advise a vacation, and get back to work, reinvent yourself if need be.. Don't give into doubt, once again, give back..

Mentor others, join non-profits, teach, you'll expand your world and your network.. So the numbers game.. My films have grossed over \$2.5 billion, two of them were the number one films of the year throughout the world Terminator II and Armageddon.. And in television, the Walking Dead is the highest rated basic cable series to date in the 18 to 49 year old demographic and remember with each project in the film business, with each startup, you're starting over from scratch.. You have a lot of capital and goodwill but you're starting again.. And now I'll open it up for questions.. Thank you.. Yes.. So if you're a struggling film student and you have a decision between taking unpaid internships in LA, scrounging for less than minimum wage, between that or like a paid internship in an unrelated field which should you choose? If you can afford the unpaid internship, do it, and do you have good intel on where to find them? Well, Stanford does have a lot of writing internships but those are mostly for script coverage.. And what kind of career are you looking for? Directing..

Okay, so there are a couple of, [mandy.com](http://mandy.com).. Have you been to that website? Yeah.. Okay, so [mandy.com](http://mandy.com), there is the UTA job board which is United Talent Agency, it has a job board that also includes internships, and if you email someone associated with this and they can get your info to me, I'll send you some exclusive things that you won't have access to.. Thank you.. You're welcome.. Heidi.. I have a question for you.. You talked a little bit earlier when we were talking about documentaries and that passion projects versus the movie business and creating movies that make a lot of money.. Right.. Can you talk a little bit about the movie business today and how you personally make decisions on where you're going to spend your time? I have a problem because I like, well I like both..

The last time that I was at Stanford was actually because I had a film in the United Nations Association Film Festival which was a documentary about, well actually I have been here twice.. One was about Navajo who served as code-talkers in World War II and then about the Choctaw who served, who created a code in World War I.. I am still in debt on both of those, so there's the old saying, how do you make a small fortune in the film industry, start with a large one.. But the industry now has more opportunity than it ever had.. Anyone of you with a smartphone can make a film, you can upload it to YouTube.. I don't know if you know this, but there are at least 16 directors and I can't give you all their names right now who made films for under \$15,000, some of them for \$400, uploaded them on YouTube and are working in the business today after one film.. There has never been more opportunity.. Now the jobs they have gotten had, because their intent was to work in commercial films.. So they were very visual effects oriented or action oriented, but that is where Hollywood is now looking.. You don't need to have a degree from a film school, but what you need to know is how to be a director..

So that's why experience on set is very important, but now it absolutely is the wild-west.. There are, I think YouTube are saying they are launching 100 different content channels, the amount of content that needs to be fed whether it's television, feature films or the internet is almost inexhaustible right now.. And you're at a better time than ever to succeed.. Yeah.. It sounds like your mentors made a really big difference in your career, but it took maybe a couple of years for the rewards to start kicking in so I am curious when you're starting out how do you know if you have a mentor who is going to reward the talent that they see in you or how do you know if you have a mentor who's just going to have you cleaning toilets for five years? Well, Roger had a track record.. Once I started working for him, and the good news is now you have the internet, so you can do a lot more research than I could at the time.. But my first week working for Roger Corman, I realized that he had launched the careers of Jonathan Demme and Martin Scorsese and there were a lot of people there especially those who were working, creating, editing, trailers, Joe Dante was editing trailers, there were a number of people who have gone on to careers in the industry who were editing trailers and they were the success stories.. So that intel was available to me, even before the internet.. You know but the truth is, if you're not given more responsibility fairly quickly it's probably time to move on.. I mean even though, working for Roger Corman I would be picking up his dry cleaning one day and in meetings with directors the next day it was never just picking up the dry cleaning..

So does that help at all? Yes.. Question, yes.. What is a rough cut? A rough cut is when a director has done their first cut or - well, there's two: there's an editor's assembly.. So an editor will assemble the film without, especially back then, because we didn't have computer editing, it was all on film.. You didn't have sound that wasn't recorded on set.. You didn't have music.. Now you can actually do all of that on Final Cut Pro or in the Avid but back then that didn't exist.. So I simply saw a very rough version of the film with no post production sound or music and I'd just never seen anything like that.. Yes.. I think I heard a story a few years ago about how the idea of Terminator sort of came out, and that it was based on the budget limitations? Sure, sure..

There a couple of things.. Well Jim was in post-production on Piranha II he was living in Rome and the producer of the film, Ovidio Assonitis was famous for hiring American directors, he was Italian but of Greek heritage.. Hiring American directors to satisfy the bond companies and to satisfy the distributors and then midway through the film kicking off those directors and directing it himself.. Jim had learned that, so Jim just refused to leave.. So when Ovidio starting directing the first unit, Jim directed the second unit.. He also formed very close relationships with the two stars of the film.. One of him was Lance Henriksen, of Piranha II and Lance actually went on to be in Terminator and Aliens and many more films.. And at night, the editing rooms were in Rome and Jim would break into the editing rooms and reedit the film at night.. So he had a credit card that didn't work because it was over its credit limit.. However, it was very good at breaking into a locked editing room..

And then the next day the editor and the director would wonder what happened but a lot of the things that he changed stayed in the film so that it wasn't horrible but, then when Ovidio got a sense that that was happening he decided to cut off Jim's per diem.. So Jim was staying in a hotel that had been prepaid for the month but he wasn't getting any money to live, so he was stealing food off of other people's room service trays, he got sick, probably not too much of a surprise, and in the middle of a fever dream while living off of other people's left over room service trays the image of the Terminator, the endoskeleton, the burnished endoskeleton emerging from the flames came to him and he called me the next day.. I am sure it was illegally from Ovidio's phone and said I have this amazing image and now that I have got it, I am going to start figuring out how to clode the Terminator because I think he even had the name already the Terminator.. And I think that it's a cyborg, but I am not quite sure of the story.. So we started talking I said well, I said this is going to be the film that we're going to work on together and he said yes, I said well - it can't take place in the future because we can't afford that.. So he said fantastic it will be a time travel movie, it will take place in contemporary Los Angeles and it was, necessity was the mother of invention.. So a lot of the initial creative decisions with the Terminator came from that fever dream and then the financial necessity.. The film, I don't know if many of you have seen it, but it cost \$6.4 million to make the Terminator, and Aliens cost \$14 million.. Any other questions? Yes.. Given your success in Aliens, are you involved in Prometheus, the prequel to Aliens? No, Jim and I were only in - we didn't have the rights to the film, we were only involved in the second one..

So, it's 20th Century Fox and there were three producers, although they weren't involved on set in Aliens, Walter Hill, Gordon Carroll and David Giler were the ones who actually had the rights at that time.. Yes? These days how do you pick your projects? The same way that I always did, which is I have to be - it has to be a project, a film or a TV series that I'd want to watch myself.. I try, I respond to things, you can criticize me because I haven't always succeeded, that are character-driven, I respond to strong, interesting characters especially ordinary people thrust into extraordinary circumstances, and many of my

films follow that in different settings.. But those are a couple of the ways that I kind of respond.. On a side note, I saw the poster for *Humanoids from the Deep* in Mendocino, California, told my wife Jill that I really wanted the movie for Christmas, so I got a DVD this Christmas of that movie.. Oh, you're welcome, it's a lot of fun.. Yeah? How are you able to give up your personal life for career success? Oh, well, you know what, I didn't give it up completely.. I did at the beginning though.. It's why - it may very well contribute to the number of ex-husbands that I have.. It's a huge compromise, things changed when my daughter was born, and actually that's I met Heidi right I think after my daughter was born and that changes your life completely, and I couldn't quite make the same sacrifices once my daughter was born..

But it's still it's all consuming, it is not something that you can do part time, at least the way that I produce.. I think there are a number of producers who are very effective at producing from their office.. But that's never been me - I love being on set, I love being involved in all of the creative decisions that are made on set.. And I consider myself a partner with the director.. Any other questions? So, the job of the producer has always seemed sort of ephemeral, is there something that you can point out in a final product when you see a finished work, where you say this project has a really good producer, like the hallmark of that quality? Well, firstly I'll talk about what a producer does because a lot of times people confuse it with what a director does or what an executive does.. As a producer, we find the material that is developed into a TV show, web series, feature film, documentary, and we're there from the very beginning.. Most of my projects start out actually without a writer.. I find material, it's an idea that I've had and so the first part is bringing a writer on board.. Once you've got a writer on board, then you have to find somebody to pay the writer.. Surprisingly, producers actually don't pay because if you can't get someone to invest in your project, that's probably a good sign because filmmaking is part of creating something that is a collaborative entity..

So, you take it to a studio, most of my films have been studio-financed.. Independent company now, I've got a couple of movies with independent companies, and then once the script is done, sometimes during the development process you bring a director on board, sometimes you wait until the script is ready to go and then you bring the director on board.. As a producer, you're responsible for creating the budget, working with the line producer, the production manager on the schedule and then very, very involved in casting, in the marketing of the film and determining the best way to distribute the film or TV series and then in the post-production process.. I'd say that if a film really, if it works, if you respond to the story or the characters except for a few auteur directors, that credit will go to the producer.. Yeah? The web has such a big influence on entertainment now, there are so many things that are web-driven, how do you see that affecting the movie business going forward? You know, I think that people still enjoy going and sharing experience with others in a dark room, but the film business is up in box office this year.. It does take a few tent-pole films, so far obviously *Hunger Games*, *Avengers*, which I've seen, is fantastic, will be coming out.. I mean there is going to be a new *Dark Knight* film.. People still want to experience that on the big screen.. It's the smaller independent films that are having a more difficult time, and I try to go see as many films as I can.. Luckily where I live in Pasadena, there are a number of art house cinemas..

I try not to look at them on DVD because I still feel that the best way to see a film is in the theater.. But it's not a growth industry.. Other people complain, popcorn is too expensive, the drinks are expensive, the truth is, that's how the theaters make their money.. They don't make their money for the most part from exhibition.. So that's why I'm happy to pay for my \$7 popcorn.. And I have to ask you, did Barca beat Chelsea today or not? No, Chelsea won.. Chelsea won? Yeah, 1-0.. Oh, so is that one goal.. Yeah.. I'm sorry, we have to play Chelsea this week, and I'm an Arsenal fan..

It's been a tough week.. Yes? So, the MPAA has taken like a pretty hard stance against piracy and illegal distribution of films, what is your take on that, like - if you're like the industry producer and who are necessarily in it for the money, what is your opinion on people doing things like this? How would you feel about someone stealing your stuff? I mean it's expensive, I'm still waiting for people to tell me how illegal downloads can enable content creators to continue to create content.. If you look at a film like, like *Avengers*, let's say it cost \$200 million.. If everyone is pirating it, where does the revenue stream come from? And you know, look at Apple, Apple gets money from everything.. Everyone seems happy to download from iTunes and yet somehow it's evil if it's a film or if it's a television program.. But you can't have products that are given away for free.. All of you in this room want to create something that people want to buy.. And those of us in the film or TV industry are the very same way.. We can't continue to do what we do if people won't pay for it.. Yes? Hi..

So for students and graduates our age who are interviewing for entry level positions, like in agencies, or as assistant to a producer, do you have any advice for how to present? Well, first of all, make sure you've got a resume, make sure you've actually got experience of some sort.. I mean it helped as I said when I went to work for Roger Corman that I worked at KZSU.. I had also done an internship at KRON in San Francisco.. So, I knew what it was like to work, even though it was an internship, and then obviously KZSU was for free.. But that was really key, and - do you have experience? So, then the other thing is really knowing where the jobs are and who is hiring and that's something once again, UTA job board, mandy.com and if you're on any tracking boards, I don't know if you know about tracking boards.. There are - if you Google tracking boards, some of them are paid, some of them are free and on the tracking boards it keeps track of the hot scripts.. It keeps track of what projects are heating up with the studios and about to go into production and a lot of job openings are posted on the different tracking boards.. I mean the UTA job board is pretty much soup to nuts, they have just about everything, and the tracking boards are very much openings for development positions and for assistant positions.. Yes? You say you choose a lot of your work to produce based on very character-driven plots and something that you really connect with, are you allowed to give us a sneak peek of the upcoming *Port Royal* that you're working on? We haven't turned the script into the network yet..

So, the creator - and once again this is a perfect idea..

I had the idea of telling a pirate story set in the late 1680s in Port Royal because I realized having shot on the water how expensive it is to shoot - to shoot on the water and how difficult it is.. And I wanted to do a pirate show, but it needed to be set on land.. And Port Royal in Jamaica in the 1680s was the crossroads of privateering and piracy and it was the transition from privateering in which, I'm sorry I can go on forever about this, which was done for the crown and it was legal and when the war of Spanish succession ended, and Spain and England were at peace, if you did that it was then piracy.. So, we're following how that affected the pirates who were based in Port Royal.. So I came up with the idea, I sent it up at FX and we hired Scott Rosenbaum, who was one of the executive producers on The Shield, to create the pilot script.. So, we hopefully will be in fact turning that in next week.. So you want to go do it? Are we done? So one more hand of applause..